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773 morning, then we will surround the camp while they sleep and kill them all.'

"The morning star came out. The father saw it and he said, 'We will show these people now that they cannot kill our sons.'

"The clansmen heard the noise of the snakes swimming in the river. They thought it the sound of a tide. The men were in the center of the island. The snakes surrounded them in the following formation:[1]

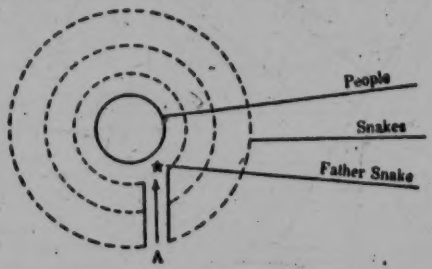

FIGURE 1.—THE MARINGO TYPE OF BATTLE FORMATION

"The father snake went in the aisle at A, just as the leader does now. They killed all the men and left them. One man escaped by climbing up a mangrove tree where the snakes did not see him.

"When the snakes went back to their own country that man came down. He went to his own clan and recruited a number of men to come fight the snakes. The Wongar snake hit them with several thunderbolts and defeated them."[2]

Milwerangel

726 The Milwerangel is a general fight between members of several clans. The element of surprise is not used. The participants know it will take place at a certain location, usually an open plain with jungle growths bordering it. After a few minutes of fighting, the combat resembles a brawl. Spears and clubs are used, but the latter play only a minor rôle. An excellent concrete example of a milwerangel will be found in the account of the feud described later in this chapter. Further generalization is unnecessary except to say that the milwerangel is a recognized type of battle and therefore has a specific name.

Gaingar

The gaingar is so deadly and results in so many casualties that it is rarely used and then only under the most extreme provocation. There

[1] This diagram is a copy of one made by a native informant.

[2] Certain elements of the myth which have nothing to do with a maringo fight have been omitted.

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are only two recorded cases in the last twenty years, one between the peoples of the Caledon Bay area and those of Buckingham Bay; the other between the peoples west of the Goyder River and along the seacoast and those east of the Goyder and in the interior. The gaingar represents a regional fight involving a large number of clans rather than the usual type in which only a few clans participate. 726

The writer recorded fifteen deaths in the Caledon Bay fight, and fourteen killed and one severely wounded in the Goyder River combat. Such casualty lists show clearly that the sparse population of the Murngin and the surrounding tribes cannot afford such a military luxury except at very rare intervals.

The fight is held between the members of several clans and is the result of regional antagonisms. It may be within the tribe or inter-tribal. It always follows a long-protracted series of killings in which each side is stimulated to an almost hysterical pitch. When one group of clans finally decides to invite its enemies for a gaingar, the people always say that this is a spear fight to end spear fights, so that from that time on there will be peace for all the clans and tribes. It is sincerely believed at the time that this is an effort to stop clan feuds.[3]

The ideal gaingar takes place in the following way: The challengers make two small spears of a special type. They are wrapped with ceremonial feathered string; two pendants of the same material and tipped with feathers hang from each. One spear has short arms and the other much longer ones. The first symbolizes the Dua moiety, the second the Yiritja. The arms are also symbolic of the men killed by each side before the challenge is sent. Dua men are put in a Dua spear, and the Yiritja are supposed to be placed in the weapon of their moiety. Although the arms may sometimes symbolize only one man, more frequently it is a whole group. 726 789

After the spears are completed they are hidden until the following day. In the morning two young men take them and run up and down in front of the warriors while the latter throw their spears at the ceremonial ones. Should one of the spears be hit, it is believed that the war party will be defeated and some of their own men killed. If they are not struck no one of their side will be killed and the expedition will be a success.

In the afternoon the two spears are placed in the ground at a throw-

[3] Talk of this kind, however, has such a familiar ring to a European of this generation that one can only smile at the seeming incongruity of a Stone Age man mouthing the meaty phrases of our twentieth-century peacemakers.

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726 [789] ing distance, and once more spears are thrown at them, but this time there is an effort made actually to strike them, since now they represent the enemies, whereas in the morning they represented the challenging clan. The spears are then sent by messenger to the enemy. They are a ceremonial invitation for battle. The enemy goes through the same ceremony if it decides to accept. The two parties then meet halfway between their respective territories.

[411] Short spears are used in the gaingar because they can be thrown from any position and are difficult to parry or avoid. The two lines of warriors stand about fifty feet apart. Leadership is almost completely absent after the fight starts. Trickery is used if possible. In the gaingar that was held in the Goyder River district, the sea people who challenged the men from the interior hid part of their forces on each side of the plain in a mangrove jungle. They placed a small party down at the forward end of the plain for the advancing people to see. As the enemy advanced this small group retreated to the jungle growth at the far end. They thus enticed their antagonists into the avenue of hidden warriors. The sea people then surrounded those from the interior and killed a large number.

Makarata

628 The makarata is a ceremonial peacemaking fight. It is a kind of general duel and partial ordeal which allows the aggrieved parties to vent their feelings by throwing spears at their enemies or by seeing the latter's blood run in expiation.

Frequently the makarata does not follow the ideal pattern; instead of providing a peacemaking mechanism, it produces only another battle in the interminable blood feud of the clans.

When sufficient time has elapsed after an injury or death of a member for the clan's emotions to calm, the men send a message to their enemies saying they are ready for a makarata. The other side usually agrees to enter into this peacemaking ceremony, although there is always suspicion of treachery. The injured group always sends the invitation, and the other must wait for them to decide when they wish to have it. Frequently makarata are held after some of the totemic ceremonies have taken place, since it is at this time that most of the clans will be present. 628 When the warriors of the injured clan or clans arrive 535 on the dueling ground they are covered with white clay. They dance in, singing a song which is descriptive of the water of their totemic well. The other side has also painted itself. The two sides stand a little

602 My informants said that they had never known *tjukarŋo* 431 to fight. So intimate is the bond that exists between these 553 people that their social personalities are often closely identified, and men, but not women, who stand in this relationship may exchange personal names. When this occurs they also exchange all their personal possessions—spears, dilly bags (baskets), tomahawks and other *gerri*. The exchange of names may take place at any time and not merely on some special ceremonial occasion. It may be permanent; and the new name then passes to the *kutara* (sister's daughters), while my own *kutara* now takes my name—the name which 431 belonged formerly to my *tjukarŋo*. The chief feature of 602 this very special relationship appears to be the obligation to send presents, and to act as host and protector to the *tjukarŋo* when he is on a visit, or when danger threatens. (726) If a member of a *miriŋo* (war-making) party meets his *tjukarŋo* when on a raiding party he will enfold him in his arms to protect him from spears, and he will act also as protector to his wife and children.

An important feature of the *tjukarŋo* relationship is exchange of gifts and a sharing of possessions no matter how valuable. It is probable that this special relationship in which the reciprocal obligations to give are very strong, arose originally from some special feature of the kinship organisation.

But the relationship upon which the great ceremonial exchange cycle rests is, as stated on pages 67 and 68, called simply *kumur märnda*.[42] Men or women who apply the term *kumur märnda* to one another, normally stand in one of the following relationships:

[42] *Kumur*, lit. sternum, hence, breast, face or aspect; *märnda*, those two, hence literally, "face to face" or "breast to breast" those two.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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797 on the new settlement, where ordinary and ancient nomadic law did not provide for the needs in a new and developing communal life. Nevertheless, I determined not to attempt to enforce it by approaching the Yulengor in the dual role of policeman-missionary, with a gun in one hand and a Bible in the other. The broad instructions given me were: 'Work along from day to day and do the best you can', and having thus more or less a free hand, I decided to try a thorough-going pacifism, though I must admit that I was doubtful if it would make any impression under these adverse conditions. Physical force was not used in any way as a means of control, although in several instances youths may possibly have deserved something of the sort for deliberate destructiveness. Taking a long chance, I declared the station neutral ground, and though fighting and quarrelling were not directly forbidden, those who wanted to fight were told to 'fight it out' on an old camping-ground twenty miles away. Such unheard of neutrality was altogether quixotic to notoriously warlike hordes, and maybe they were nonplussed by the novelty of it and came into the way of accepting it.

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accompanies the maiyabala to assist in locating and killing the murderer. Maiyabala are often carried in the mouth, in totemic dilly-bags, or rolled in bees wax and tied round the neck. They give extra strength and skill to the wearers and guide them to the enemy, who, in turn, is made unwary and tired.

Raiwola told me that he had accepted such a maiyabala but for years his vow remained unfulfilled. Then one day after a long kangaroo hunt in the rain he stood warming himself by a fire with several other men, amongst whom chanced to be the killer of his relative. Without a word Raiwola plunged his spear into him, and in reply to the astounded questions of the huntsmen, he produced his maiyabala as proof that it had been done in settlement of the old debt.

It is rarely left to one man to avenge a death, for in the heat of emotion that follows a killing the relatives go in a body to exact vengeance. Killing-parties are known as 'merringor', and their appropriate sign in the sign-language is wiping the open palm down over the face to suggest their ruthlessness in wiping out men, women, and children. In feverish passion, and with maiyabala and totemic dilly-bags slung from their necks, merringor lose all fear and travel relentlessly till they are lean and exhausted. They daub their bodies with white clay, a practice which plainly indicates their intentions, then creep silently on their enemies, and with wild yells they hurl their spears into the sleeping groups. Such raids are seldom bloodless, and more deaths result from these attacks than from all other forms of violence.